

A YEAR WITH THE REBBE

kvutza



IVAR 5729, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 281839

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חי' מושקא תחי'
לרגל הולדתה כ"ה ניסן ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה שיחיו
שמוטקין

You ask about coming here again. First you need to “unpack” what you already acquired while you were here; what you received consciously, and the even greater things that you received subconsciously. Especially given the fact that with Hashem’s help, you were here twice for the month of Tishrei. You need to utilize all these “goods,” at least partially. Let it affect you to be a lamdan, a diligent student, and an oved, the way a tomim really should be.

The Rebbe to a bochur in yechidus after spending a year in 770 with the kvutza program

With the Rebbe

Every Chossid lives for the time he can spend in the Rebbe's presence.

For a *talmid* in yeshiva especially, being in the Rebbe's presence is paramount. These years are what set the foundation for his entire life and give him the fortitude needed to brave *olam hazeh* and fulfill his shlichus in this world. Studying in the Rebbe's presence and learning Torah directly from the Rebbe makes for a life that is altogether of a different nature.

After World War II, when the Rebbe visited Paris to greet his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, he spent much time farbrenging with members of *anash* who had recently escaped the Iron Curtain. The Rebbe encouraged them to strengthen their *hiskashrus* and pushed many of them to take the opportunity to travel to New York and see the Friediker Rebbe.

Reb Refoel Wilchansky was a *bochur* at the time, and the Rebbe seemed to put an extra emphasis on the importance for him to go. "A *bochur* needs to be near the Rebbe!" the Rebbe told him. "Yes, the main thing is to be connected to the Rebbe with a *ruchnius* connection. Nevertheless, being far away from the Rebbe in the physical sense can have a negative effect..."¹



Trickling In

In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, travel was not what it is today. Air travel was a novelty and traveling by boat took a long time and came with a hefty price. But this only made the will of the *bochurim* in Eretz Yisroel to travel to the Rebbe even stronger.

Indeed, over the years a number of them succeeded in crossing the Atlantic Ocean and joined the yeshiva in the Rebbe's *daled amos*.

The first group of *bochurim* to come to New York during the Rebbe's

"A bochur needs to be near the Rebbe! ...Being far away from the Rebbe in the physical sense can have a negative effect."

nesius included Yoel Kahn, a graduate of Achei Temimim in Tel Aviv where he learned under Reb Chaim Shaul Brook. A few months earlier, in Teves 5710*, the group of six *talmidim* received their visas and were allowed to leave Eretz Yisroel for New York. The Friediker Rebbe sent them a letter, giving them his consent and blessing for the trip.



As it turned out, they arrived in New York after the Friediker Rebbe's *histalkus*. Reb Yoel would later relate that he asked the Rebbe if he should stay in New York, even though the original reason to come, learning near the Rebbe, didn't seem to apply anymore. The Rebbe said, "My father-in-law told you to come, and he certainly knew what was going to happen. He didn't mean you should only be here for two weeks and then go back..."²

Obviously, they stayed. The *bochurim* immediately became *mekusharim* of the Rebbe and Reb Yoel went on to become the "*chozer*," being the first one to transcribe the Rebbe's *sichos* for posterity and setting up the *Vaad L'Hafatzas Sichos*.³

With time, the Rebbe would call in each *bochur* individually and ask them what they were learning, guiding and advising them as to how to go about their *limmud haTorah* and *avodas Hashem*.

The Rebbe once mentioned at a farbrengen that the *kvutza bochurim* have a special *hetter* to leave Eretz Yisroel and come to New York (even though a person is usually halachically prohibited from doing so), because they are here to learn Torah. Although

they could have learned Torah in Eretz Yisroel as well, they had to come here because the Gemara teaches us: "לא מן הכל אדם זוכה ללמוד—a person is not always able to learn from every teacher..." And "לעולם ילמוד אדם תורה—במקום שלבו חפץ—a person should always learn Torah in the place where his heart desires..." They had to come here to learn specifically from *ploni*, etc.⁴

In other words, the true reason why they have to travel across the world to learn Torah, is to be able to learn from the Rebbe himself and be guided by his holy words.

As the years progressed, more *bochurim* trickled in to New York and joined the central Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. This went on until finally, with a large amount of *bochurim* wishing to go the Rebbe, a proper program was arranged in which the Israeli *bochurim* could travel to New York. Thus was founded the "*kvutza*" program, with the Rebbe's involvement at every step of the way.

A Novelty

The *kvutza* program was not without its hurdles. There were plenty of bumps along the way when trying to launch such a novel idea.

The first was getting the *hanhala* of the yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel to agree to letting go of a relatively large group of *bochurim* all at once. It is important to remember that in those days, the entire yeshiva in Lod only consisted of a small amount of students. Letting go of 10 older *bochurim* could potentially have a negative impact on the ones left behind.



JEM 102404

THE REBBE FARBRENGS WITH ANASH IN PARIS DURING HIS VISIT IN 5707.



ELUL 5736, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 203196



ELUL 5736, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 203205

Then they needed the *hanhala* at 770 to sign an affidavit for each *bochur*, assuring the US government that the students would be taken care of while staying here in this country.

But the greatest obstacle of all was from the Israeli government. Due to the mandatory military draft of every able-bodied 18-year-old boy, it wasn't so simple to arrange for a large group of yeshiva *bochurim* to leave the country for a year.

But one by one, the issues were worked through.

Rabbi Aharon Halperin, one of the *bochurim* hoping to join the first group, relates in this regard:



"My birthday is around Pesach time and in my letter to the Rebbe, I asked for a *bracha* that we should succeed in our efforts to come to the Rebbe for the following year (5722*). In

response, I received a standard letter from the Rebbe, with an added postscript about my request, I should speak to the *hanhala* and follow their guidance..."⁵

In *yechidus* with the Rebbe, the *mashpia* in Lod, Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, asked the Rebbe if he would agree to send *bochurim* from the yeshiva at 770 to take the place of the *talmidim* who were leaving. At the *yechidus* itself, the Rebbe did not respond to this request; but later on in a letter, the Rebbe said that "I spoke to Rabbi Hodakov about it..." Eventually, this idea indeed came to fruition and at the Rebbe's behest, a group of "*talmidim-shluchim*" were sent from 770 to learn in Eretz Yisroel, "replacing" the *bochurim* who would be leaving for the *kvutza* program."⁶

A week before their scheduled trip, the exit permits finally arrived from

the Israeli Ministry of Defense; but they were only valid for one month. This came along with a warning not to even try for an extension! Needless to say, the *bochurim* were devastated. Some of them even thought perhaps to wait with their trip until they'd be able to obtain permission for a longer stay. But they decided to go with *bitachon* and hoped that they would succeed in extending their stay.

Shehechiyanu!

Finally, the awaited day arrived. Along with dozens of Chassidim on the second chartered flight from Eretz Yisroel to the Rebbe for Tishrei, the group of 11 *bochurim* made their way to the Rebbe for the first time.

We can only imagine the excitement, and at the same time—the awe and reverence of the moment felt by these *bochurim* at the time. In those



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days, there were no hookups of the Rebbe's farbrengens, no videos of the Rebbe, and there were barely a few audio recordings going around. The physical distance from the Rebbe was tangible and real. Finally having the chance to see the Rebbe and bask in his holy presence was something they could only have dreamed of. And now it had finally become a reality!

Originally, the flight was scheduled to arrive in time for the Chassidim to daven Maariv with the Rebbe's *minyan*. The Rebbe even delayed the starting time for them. But due to a technical glitch in the landing, the passengers were held up too long and the Rebbe davened before they were able to make it.

The group finally arrived at 770 late at night. It was then, when the Rebbe left his room for home, that they were able to catch but a glimpse of the Rebbe's face as he walked out of 770. The *bochurim* all recited *Shehechiyanu*

and thanked Hashem for being given this special opportunity.

The month of Tishrei was upon them; a special month full of *giluyim*. The Rebbe's Simchas Torah farbrengen was especially uplifting: the Rebbe went on for 10 hours straight and said *lchaim* many times. In middle, the Rebbe stood up and said a *sicha* about the Yidden in Russia, crying that they should be able to come out of exile. Early that morning, the Rebbe taught the *niggun* of An'im Zemiros, along with many other *giluyim*.

In middle of the month of Tishrei, the *bochurim* were able to get an extension of their permits for a total of three months. Needless to say, the *talmidim* were overjoyed and they took this as a first step towards the hopeful possibility of being able to stay for a full year.

Immediately after the *yomim tovim* ended, the two groups of *bochurim* (the ones from Eretz Yisroel who had

recently arrived and the ones from 770 who would be leaving to Eretz Yisroel shortly) went into the Rebbe's room for a joint *yechidus*. The Rebbe addressed both groups in explaining the meaning of moving from one location to another, and how our *avodas Hashem* must progress in each place.

The next day, Rabbi Hodakov held a meeting with the *bochurim* and helped them chart out how to bring the Rebbe's words into actuality. He also appointed two *bochurim* from each group that would be in charge of writing reports to the Rebbe about their work.

The *bochurim* acclimated into the *sedarim* of the yeshiva and learned Torah diligently. Over the years, the Rebbe often reminded the members of the *kvutza* that the only reason they were allowed to leave Eretz Yisroel was to increase in their Torah learning.

The Rebbe bemoaned the fact that the Israeli government wouldn't allow them to remain here through Pesach and see "ah Yiddishen seder."

Obviously, the most important Torah learning that could be done only here in the United States was the Torah they learned from the Rebbe himself.

"At first, we had a hard time focusing and understanding the Rebbe's words at the farbrengens," says Rabbi Micha Steinmetz. "Firstly, we had to get used to the intense pushing and shoving that naturally came along with standing in the overcrowded shul. Additionally, we needed to learn and grow accustomed to the Rebbe's style to fully understand and appreciate the *sichos* and *maamarim*. Of course, this was a major priority at this stage in our lives, and we put in much effort until we were able to participate in the Rebbe's farbrengens successfully."⁷

Another Extension

Three months passed by fairly quickly and the *bochurim* were not ready to give up so fast and return to Eretz Yisroel. When they asked the Rebbe what to do in order to prolong their stay, the Rebbe told them to work with the *hanhala*. When Reb Efraim Wolf was in *yechidus* during that time, the Rebbe instructed him to be in touch with Mr. Niv Dekel, a representative of the Israeli Security Consul in New York.

Of course, the Rebbe was updated about each additional step taken. At one point, the Rebbe wrote that they should try to be able to stay till after Pesach.

With much intervention and a lot of bureaucratic maneuvering, they were able to extend the permits for an additional four months, but they would have to leave before Pesach.

On the day before their departure, Rabbi Hodakov notified the *bochurim* that they would have a group *yechidus* with the Rebbe the next day!

When they all entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe was sitting with a silk *kapota* (a rare occurrence on a weekday) and immediately began reciting a *maamar*—"אל יפטר אדם מחברו."

There was an incredible mixed-feeling in the hearts of the *bochurim*: On the one hand, they were obviously pained by the fact that they would now take leave from 770. With travel and communication much more limited in those days, the departure was all the more difficult. On the other hand, they felt overjoyed by having the *zechus* to have been with the Rebbe for so long, with the Rebbe showing them so many *kiruvim* and caring for them like a loving father all along.

After the *maamar* and a short *sicha*, the Rebbe handed each of them a Tanya, saying that this will be the token for "מתוך כך זוכרהו." (This was based on the words of Chazal quoted at the beginning of the *maamar*: "אל יפטר אדם מחברו אלא מתוך דבר הלכה שמתוך כך זוכרהו—a person should only take leave of his friend by stating a word of halacha, for through this he will be remembered.") Along with the Tanya, they each received a silver dollar.

The Rebbe told them to give over "joyous regards" ("א פריילעכן גרוס") at each stop of their journey home, especially in Eretz Yisroel, and to strengthen the yeshivos with their visits. "One or two of you should be

selected to write reports every few weeks about the things you are doing," the Rebbe concluded.⁸

After the *yechidus*, they were summoned by Rabbi Hodakov who gave them each 50 dollars as the Rebbe's contribution to their trip fair, along with some instructions about their trip.

Rabbi Yitzchak Yehuda Yeruslavsky, who was one of the *bochurim* in the first *kvutza*, explained to us in an interview:

"The attention the Rebbe showed us, especially when we were leaving, was absolutely unprecedented. In addition to reciting a *maamar* **only** for us, the Rebbe also escorted us out the door of 770. To the best of my knowledge, the Rebbe did not do this for any other *kvutza* after us..."

The *bochurim* were scheduled to leave that evening and the Rebbe davened Maariv earlier than usual so that they could join his *minyán*. As they were about to leave to the airport, the *bochurim* were given various letters from the Rebbe to be delivered to members of *anash* in the places they were scheduled to stop over.

Reaching Eretz Yisroel, they immediately began fulfilling their shlichus: speaking and farbrenging in the various communities and educational institutions throughout the land, bringing fresh reports from life with the Rebbe and reviewing the *sichos* and *maamarim* they heard while there.

Joining the yeshiva at Kfar Chabad recharged and almost born anew, the *temimim* of the first *kvutza* breathed new life into their old home, bringing the real *chayus* from the Rebbe as it manifested in their everyday learning of Torah and *avodas Hashem*.

Continuation

The ground had been broken, but there was still a long way to go. The Israeli bureaucracy was complicated

“Everything that we have today; it’s all based on that special year with the Rebbe.”

and difficult to breach. But the work went on and a year later, another *kvutza* was preparing to come to the Rebbe—for 5724*. Again, these *kvutzos* were only able to stay for a few months at a time.

For the year of 5725*, the *kvutza* arrived on Chai Elul 5724* and remained in New York until Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Unfortunately, they were unable to stay for Pesach, although the Rebbe strongly wanted it. In a *yechidus* with Reb Itchke Gansberg (a veteran Chabad askan and mechanech in Eretz Yisroel), the Rebbe bemoaned the fact that the Israeli government wouldn’t allow them to remain here through Pesach and see “*ah Yiddishen seder*.” In fact, Reb Shlomo Zarchi, the *mashpia* at 770 relates that the Rebbe once remarked: “צוויי ניסכים איז בעסער ווי” “צווי תשרי” (i.e. a *bochur* being here for the Yom Tov of Pesach is more important and would have an even greater impact than being here for the whole month of Tishrei!)

In our interview with Rabbi Chananya Yosef Eizenbach, a member of the 5725* *kvutza*, he related:

“We actually traveled to and from New York by ship. [It should be noted that when the *hanhala* wanted to send the first group back by ship to Europe and from there they would fly to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe rejected the idea saying that it is unfair to make the *bochurim* schlep for so long just to save some money... -ed.]

“The first time we saw the Rebbe was during Maariv on the day of our arrival. I remember feeling so uplifted at that moment; I wrote in a letter to friends and family in Eretz Yisroel that even having seen the Rebbe only once

had already paid off all my expenses and made my trip worth it.

“Right at the beginning of the year, on Vov Tishrei, the Rebbe’s mother passed away. Then the Rebbe started *farbrenging* every Shabbos and introduced the new ‘Rashi Sichos’ in her memory. It was an amazing year to be with the Rebbe. The *farbrengens* came so often, and were long and rich!

“Unfortunately, we were unable to stay through Pesach as the Rebbe had wanted. On the Shabbos before we left, the Rebbe said a whole *sicha* about us; quite an emotional *sicha* about “די וואס פארן—those that are leaving now.” The Rebbe repeated the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe that even though we are leaving physically, we will still be very much connected.

“Since the Rebbe was in the year of *aveilus*, he did not see us off in a group *yechidus*. Instead, we were given instructions by Rabbi Hodakov. We were to stop in various locations of *anash* and bring regards from the Rebbe’s presence, placing special emphasis on the importance of learning the entire section in Likkutei Torah each week—something the Rebbe was *shturem*ing about at the time...

“When we returned to Eretz Yisroel, we went around and spoke in many places. Coming back from the Rebbe was a major novelty; most people in Eretz Yisroel never saw the Rebbe and hookups or videos weren’t around yet. We reviewed the *sichos* and *maamarim* and spoke about the Rebbe as much as we could.”

Shana Temima

Finally, the proper arrangements with the Israeli government were

made, and the *kvutza* of 5726* was able to stay for a full year.

Rabbi Avraham Alter Heber, a member of the 5726* *kvutza*, relates:



“Traveling to the Rebbe was a big deal. Our *mashpia*, Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, drilled into us how important it was to prepare ourselves in a *pnimiusdike* way. For this reason, even though we came to New York before Tishrei, we weren’t allowed into *yechidus* with the Rebbe until the month of Teves. The *hanhala* told us we needed time to properly prepare ourselves—most importantly by hearing the Rebbe’s *maamarim* and *sichos* at the *farbrengens*.”

Rabbi Zalman Gopin, another member of that group, relates how they first saw the Rebbe:



“We arrived in New York in the evening on a direct El-Al flight. A large group of *bochurim* came to greet us at the airport and together we were bused to 770. We saw the Rebbe shortly thereafter leaving the car and walking into 770. It was a special moment; we all recited *Shehechiyanu*...”

Later that year, the Rebbe spoke at a *farbrengen* about the fact that *chazzara* of *sichos* and *maamarim* was not being done right and that it needed fixing. Some of the *bochurim* got involved in helping Reb Yoel Kahn with remembering and transcribing the *farbrengens*, including Rabbi Gopin.

“That year with the Rebbe is what shaped our entire lives,” Rabbi Gopin says. “Everything that we have today, any connection that we have with the Rebbe, with Chassidus, and *avodas Hashem*; it’s all based on that special year with the Rebbe.”

As far as the group for the following year, 5727*, the Israeli government became weary about letting the *bochurim* go for so long



REUNION OF THE FIRST GROUP OF KVUTZAH IN ERETZ YISROEL, AN ANNUAL TRADITION FOR THE GROUP.



REB YOEL KAHAN LEARNS WITH A GROUP OF BOCHURIM IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL AT 770.

and stated that they wouldn't give permission for the next group to leave until the previous group returned, which was after Tishrei 5727*. But as it turned out, the new group was only able to come in the month of Nissan. Thus began a new system of each *kvutza* coming for one year, from before Pesach until after the following Pesach.

Rabbi Sholom Ber Cohen, a member of that *kvutza*, related in an interview with us:

"We arrived on 10 Nissan 5727*. The first time we saw the Rebbe was at Mincha. We noticed how the Rebbe gazed at us very intensely, as if taking extra note to our presence. It is interesting that throughout the year, the Rebbe spoke about the *kvutza bochurim* relatively often.

"We were *zoche* to have been with the Rebbe for two Pesachs, being

The Only Heter

Rabbi Sholom Ber Cohen relates:

"The Rebbe emphasized again and again that the only reason we came to New York was to study Torah. Even in the summer, when most of the yeshiva emptied out and went on Merkos Shlichus or to camps, we were sitting and learning. One *bochur* wrote to the Rebbe that he felt he wasn't learning well anyways and asked permission to be allowed to go on Merkos Shlichus during the summer, the Rebbe responded:

א"כ באיזה היתר יצא מאה"ק ועליו לחזור מיד.

If this is the case, how can you justify [halachically] your leaving Eretz Yisroel; you must return immediately.

"(Parenthetically, I remember that another *bochur* once wrote to the Rebbe that sometimes he misses *sof zam krias shema* in the morning. The Rebbe responded, applying the words of the Alter Rebbe in Tanya, that with a small *aveira*, a person can fool himself and think עוֹדֵנוּ בִּיהֲדוּתוֹ, that he is still a fine Jew and connected to Hashem. But as the Alter Rebbe proves, that is actually not true...)

"Another time that the Rebbe reprimanded us was during a weekday *krias haTorah*. In those years, the Rebbe wouldn't daven Shacharis with the *minyan*. Instead, he would join our *minyan* on Monday and Thursday, only for *krias haTorah*. After receiving an *aliya*, the Rebbe would wait until the *sefer Torah* was brought back into the *aron*, and in the meantime he would say Tehillim. Once, while we were gazing at the Rebbe as he said Tehillim, the Rebbe turned to us and said, 'איר גייט דאך מיט', וואס חלומ'ט איר? איר גייט דאך מיט—Why are you daydreaming? You are wearing tefillin!"

At the farbrengen on Shabbos Hagadol, the first week that we were with the Rebbe, the Rebbe spoke a lengthy *sicha* about us. The Rebbe gave a whole halachic analysis about why it was permissible for us to come to New York, obviously only to learn Torah. At the end of the *sicha* the Rebbe gave us a bottle of *mashke* to say *l'chaim*.¹⁰

THE KVUTZA BOCHURIM DANCE UPON RETURNING TO ERETZ YISROEL AFTER SPENDING A YEAR WITH THE REBBE.

1948, LEV FREIDIN VIA JEM 28812

THE BOCHURIM IN 770 LED BY REB MORDECHAI MENTLIK AND REB DOVID RASKIN WAIT IN THE AIRPORT TO GREET THE NEW GROUP OF KVUTZA.

JEM 306727

5723, GERSHON SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 303120

present at four of the Rebbe's *sedarim*. It was a most amazing experience.

"Before the Rebbe's *seder*, the Rebbe came to visit our *seder* in the dining room at 749 Eastern Parkway. The Rebbe toured through the whole floor and then went back to 770, then we hurriedly conducted the whole *seder* in order to make it on time to join the Rebbe's *seder* in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment on the second floor of 770.

"Being with the Rebbe for that year literally changed our lives. We knew so little about the Rebbe beforehand, and suddenly we saw the Rebbe on a daily basis. It was incredible! We were

finally able to see and understand that we have a Rebbe, a *Ro'eh Yisroel* and feel connected. The year in *kvutza* is what set the tone for our whole lives afterwards..."

From then on, the *seder* was that the *kvutza bochurim* came from before Pesach until after the next Pesach, until the year 5738*. Beginning from summer 5738*, the *kvutza* would come from before Tishrei until after the following Tishrei.

Rabbi Menashe Chadad of the 5730*-5731* *kvutza* related to us in an interview:

"Moshe Dayan agreed to allow them to come here to New York for 12 months and study pnimius haTorah. Where does the issue arise? Here in New York!"

"While we were at the airport, Rabbi Efroim Wolf spoke to us about the Rebbe's instruction that we must take upon ourselves to learn diligently. If not, we were not to go to New York."

In the *sefer Yemei Temimim*, there is a telegram from the Rebbe to Rabbi Wolf dated 7 Nissan 5730*:

"תמוהה ומוזרה השמועה שכאילו לא הזהירו כל אחד מהתלמידים הרוצים לנסוע לכאן שזהו ממש תלוי בהחלטתם התקיפה ללמוד כאן בהתמדה ובריאת שמים ובהנהגה חסידותית, ובוודאי יזהירו עתה ויודיעוני בטח."

"The rumor is extremely puzzling, maintaining that you did not sufficiently warn the talmidim who wish to come here that it is only up to them; if they decide resolutely to learn diligently with *yiras shamayim* and *chassidishe* conduct. You will certainly warn them now and notify me for sure..."

Even Moshe Dayan Knows It!

A few weeks after the *kvutza* arrived in 5730*, the Rebbe spoke about the hard time the *bochurim* had in making all the arrangements to come and reprimanded the *hanhala* in New York for not showing enough interest in their cause.

The Rebbe spoke with great pain, bemoaning the fact that the Chassidim here in New York cared less about the *bochurim* coming here than the members of the Israeli Security Consul.

“The Ministry of Defense is generally not interested in sending young men to yeshiva; they are more concerned about drafting them to the military. Nevertheless, an amazing thing happened and Moshe Dayan agreed to allow them to come here to New York for 12 months and study *pnimius haTorah*. Where does the issue arise? Here in New York! They couldn’t find enough money in the whole New York to buy a few more beds and some meager pieces of bread for the *bochurim* who just want to come here and learn!”

The Rebbe spoke at length about this whole issue and expressed his hope that in the future, the attitude will change and things will get better.

“These *bochurim* went on *mesirus nefesh* to try and come here. They have no money. Instead they borrow and get themselves into debt, only to pay it back with the money of their dowry upon getting married!

“Their parents tell them to stay in Eretz Yisroel. ‘There are enough yeshivos here, even yeshivos that learn *pnimius haTorah*,’ they say. Despite all this, and despite not being given very good accommodations here in New York, the *bochurim* don’t take this into account and come here anyways!

“...No one has time to try and help them. Instead, they are busy learning Chitas. Think to yourself: What would the [Frierdiker] Rebbe rather, that you should say Chitas on time, or that you should maybe push it off till the evening and spend five minutes helping the *bochurim* who want to come here and learn?”

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 60, p. 29)

On 10 Nissan, Rabbi Wolf writes in a letter that he indeed spoke to each of the *talmidim* about this matter.¹¹

A few weeks later, the Rebbe spoke about this at a farbrengen.¹²

The *kvutza* program continued throughout the ensuing years and continues through this day, serving as a golden opportunity for thousands of Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel to spend a full year in the Rebbe’s presence and shape their lives around the Rebbe’s Torah and shlichus.

The Rebbe himself says as much in a fascinating letter to Mr. Menachem

Begin (at the time Israel’s Interior Minister and later Prime Minister):

“Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking interest in this matter [arranging special permission for *talmidim* in Eretz Yisroel to join the *kvutza*].

“...We are talking about *bochurim* who only want to come here and learn Torah for a while, and they feel that they will be successful in their studies here and in gaining the proper outlook on life, etc. The rule is that people are more successful if they study in the place where their heart desires.

“...Additionally, the education they will receive here will instill in them the appreciation and responsibility they have to use their strengths and talents for the benefit of the public... Those students from the Holy Land who have already been through this system and went back to the Holy Land at the end of their course here [have indeed acted on this premise]. Their stay here has turned out to be a great blessing not only for them, but for the entire land of Israel. The benefit is ultimately not just their own, but it is for the good of the entire nation, and for the whole of the Holy Land...”¹³ T

1. Yemei Melech vol. 3, p. 67.
2. Yemei Bereishis p. 107.
3. See *Retaining Chassidus—Part II*, Derher Adar II 5776.
4. Sichas Shabbos Hagadol 5727.
5. Interview with Kfar Chabad magazine issue 1572.
6. See *The Rebbe will Always be with you; An Exclusive Interview with Rabbi Yosef Abrahams*, Derher Tammuz 5779.
7. Interview with Kfar Chabad magazine ibid.
8. *Toras Menachem* vol. 33, p. 142.
9. Interview with Kfar Chabad magazine issue 1625.
10. *Toras Menachem* vol. 49, p. 272.
11. Vol. 4, p. 273.
12. Shabbos Parshas Metzora; *Toras Menachem* vol. 60, p. 49.
13. Igros Kodesh vol. 26, p. 299.